



CITY OF MANCHESTER DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT OPERATORS GUIDE

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I. INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to assist new food service operators through the Manchester Health Department's permit process as well as to assist existing establishments in complying with City and State codes. The City of Manchester licenses all food service establishments operating within the City under the authority of the Manchester Code of Ordinances, Section 117-1 through 117-32. As a "Self Inspecting City", the Manchester Health Department enforces applicable state laws and has adopted the New Hampshire Rules for the Sanitary Production and Distribution of Food (He-P 2300 sections 2301 through 2328). A copy of these rules may be obtained from the NH Division of Public Health Services, Bureau of Food Protection, 6 Hazen Drive, Concord NH 03301-6527 or call 1-800-852-3345 ext. 4589. These rules outline the basic requirements for operating a food service establishment. The City of Manchester may adopt more stringent regulations for City Ordinance.

II. HOW TO OBTAIN A FOOD SERVICE PERMIT IN MANCHESTER:

1. **Plan Review:** Any individual wishing to open a new establishment or purchase an existing establishment must prepare an accurate, to scale (i.e. 1 inch = 4 feet) floor plan of the proposed facility. It is advised that you make contact with the Health Department, Environmental Health Division, early in the planning process to avoid any unnecessary effort and expense. Plans should reflect the accurate location and description of all equipment and facilities within the establishment. All equipment must be approved for commercial use by the NSF or its equivalent. House type equipment is not allowed. Four copies of plans are required to be submitted to the Health Department which include seating plans. The plans will be reviewed by the appropriate district Environmental Health Specialist who will make any necessary recommendations to the establishment representative. Once approved by the Health Department, plans will be stamped and a copy retained by the Health Department. The owner will also give a copy to the Building Department and the Fire Department. Any changes to these plans after they are approved **must be approved** by the Health Department. Approved plans stamped by the Health Department are required in order to apply for a building permit from the City Building Department.

2. **Sign-off Sheet / License Application:** When plans are approved by the Health Department a sign-off sheet will be given to the establishment representative. It is required that all other appropriate City Departments (Building, Fire etc.) sign-off on this form when their requirements have been complied with and approved by them. The appropriate district Environmental Health Specialist will conduct a pre-opening inspection. It is advised that in order to expedite the process, the appropriate Environmental Health Specialist is contacted to visit the establishment during final renovations. If this inspection is satisfactory, the sign off

sheet will be signed. The completed sign off sheet will be given by the owner to the Building Department to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy.

3. Permit: Following the completion of the sign-off sheet a food service permit application with the appropriate fee will be submitted by the owner. The permit issued is in effect for one year, expiring on the last day of the month in which it was issued. The permit classification is based on a combination of seating and/or service being provided. A permit is not transferable from person to person or from one location to another.

4. Change of owner/location: If an establishment is changing ownership or location, the owner must make contact with the Health Department prior to these changes taking effect. In some situations, renovations and upgrading of the facility may be required prior to issuing a new permit. (Plans will be required if no plans are on file or if a new location renovations are involved). Existing facilities must also notify the Health Department prior to initiating any major renovations to an existing food service establishment (i.e. electrical, plumbing, equipment changes). New floor plans may be requested in such cases.

III. INSPECTIONS:

The Health Department Environmental Health Specialists conduct inspections of food service facilities on an unannounced basis. Inspections are conducted during regular operating hours of the establishment. The number of inspections conducted in each establishment per year varies by size and rating scores. Normally large operations are inspected four times a year and smaller operations twice a year. However, more frequent inspections may be conducted if any serious violations are found during a routine inspection. During the inspection, the Environmental Health Specialist (see attached) completes a Food Establishment Inspection Report. The establishment owner/manager should review this report with the Environmental Health Specialist and ask any questions regarding the inspection.

A rating score (based on 100) is earned by the establishment based on the number of points lost due to non-compliance. All critical item violations (4 or 5 point items) must be corrected immediately or within the time allotted by the Environmental Health Specialist. Failure to correct a critical violation within the allotted time may result in the issuance of a citation (ticket). All other items noted on the report must be corrected prior to the next routine inspection. If an establishment demonstrates that it will not comply with applicable codes and ordinances after repeated violations, the Board of Health may initiate permit suspension or revocation proceedings.

IV. FOOD SAFETY SEMINARS:

Per City Ordinance, each food service facility must have at least one supervisory staff member attend a food safety seminar to maintain a permit in Manchester. The Department usually conducts seminars twice a year. These two-hour seminars are held during the day with

a choice of a morning or afternoon session. You will be notified of the date and time of upcoming seminars if your establishment has not yet met this requirement.

V. FOOD SERVICE MERIT AWARDS

Each year the Manchester Health Department issues Public Health Excellence Awards for Food Safety. Restaurants, which operate in a sanitary manner, play an important role in the prevention of food borne illness in the community. These establishments deserve positive recognition. A series of stringent criteria has been developed for those establishments which maintain high sanitary standards, comply with applicable laws and regulations and have staff who are trained in safe food handling. For more information about these awards please contact your Environmental Health Specialist .

The Health Department staff is eager and willing to assist you in complying with our food code requirements. Environmental Health Specialists maintain office hours from 8:00 - 9:00 a.m., and from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. each workday. You can also call us at 624-6466 to make an appointment to meet with your district Environmental Health Specialist. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Environmental Health Division.

Chief of Environmental Health: Timothy M. Soucy, RS, MPH Ext. 305

Environmental Health Specialists:

Philip J. Alexakos, REHS, MPH
Senior Public Health Specialist II Ext. 307

Aaron Krycki, BS
Environmental Health Specialist I Ext. 309

John Carlson, BS
Environmental Health Specialist I Ext. 308

Karen Sutkus, BS
Environmental Health Specialist I Ext. 306

Kimberly Bouldry, BA
Environmental Health Specialist I Ext. 327

Administrative Assistant II:
Pauline S. Dumais Ext. 311